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ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE FUNCTIONING OF THE PERMANENT SECRETARIAT

MEDIUM-TERM STRATEGY OF THE SECRETARIAT

Strategic focus for the secretariat in the context of the implementation of the Convention and programme proposals

Note by the secretariat

As requested by the Conference of the Parties (COP) in its decision 7/COP.2, the secretariat is hereby submitting a document on the medium-term strategy as well as a compendium containing recent submissions 1/ by the Parties for consideration by the COP.

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I. CONTEXT

1. The worldwide effort to combat desertification, to reverse the processes of desertification and to mitigate the effects of drought in arid, semi-arid and dry sub-humid areas, have substantial implications because of the geographical scope of these processes, the number of countries affected and the population groups who are the victims. They therefore stand at the heart of the strategies pursued by the international community in order to eradicate poverty, create propitious conditions for sustainable development and save the biosphere from the threats it faces. The United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification, which has now been ratified by most countries members of the United Nations and observer countries, bears witness to the universal resolve to translate into new strategies, institutional arrangements and appropriate machinery for concerted action and cooperation, the determination of the signatories and country Parties to respond to this challenge.

2. The Convention joins other international legal instruments which strive to remedy the hurts sustained by the planet. But it is also an innovative instrument in that it has itself the role of relocating a clearly circumscribed problem in the context of sustainable development, particularly in affected developing countries. The Convention encourages further collaboration of activities carried out under its auspices and those of other international agreements, and notes the trend in the commitments of the international community not only to give new impetus to internationally coordinated efforts for improving the quality of life of people leaving in arid, semi-arid and dry sub-humid areas but also to deal with the issue of sustainable development in an integrated manner.

3. The Convention should not be seen as initiating a separate programme to combat desertification and mitigate the effects of drought: the purpose here is to offer to decision makers and all relevant actors, an appropriate tool which could contribute to putting affected developing countries on the road for an overall development planning strategy. In that sense, the Convention is as much a development as an environmental undertaking.

4. The purpose of a strategic framework for the secretariat should be seen as an effort to mainstream its activities and provide Parties and all interested actors with information on the main areas of intervention in the context of the UNCCD.

5. Now that the implementation of the Convention is beginning, it would seem necessary to promote under the guidance of the Parties and in accordance with the UNCCD provisions, a policy framework which could serve as an information source on the activities of the secretariat.

6. The Convention assigns specific roles and obligations to all relevant actors and the secretariat constitutes one prominent element of that framework. The strategy to be put in place will serve essentially to help affected developing country Parties to implement the Convention, bearing in mind that the secretariat has neither the mandate nor the operational capability to meet every request. It is however the secretariat's role to promote the implementation of the Convention by providing various Parties with information that will enable them to coordinate their efforts towards successful activities under the UNCCD.

II. STRAGEGIC FOCUS FOR THE SECRETARIAT (2000-2001)

A. Mission statement

7. The Convention to Combat Desertification and Drought entered into force on 26 December 1996. Through it, the signatory and country Parties endorsed for the first time a concept of international law which extends well beyond the specialized topics that are generally the subject of such conventions. The international community, which recognizes the global dimension of the problem of desertification and the effects of drought as well as its social, economic and political implications, has enacted legal provisions which refer expressly to worldwide obligations relating to development and integrated action in the field of natural resources. The topic of desertification is thus no longer a specific environmental problem, but forms a framework which can help countries to act in a more structured and more consistent way in the various fields which influence the solution of the problems addressed by the Convention.

8. In this respect, the Convention makes a substantial addition to all the measures, programmes and resolutions which, since the first United Nations Conference on Desertification in Nairobi in 1977, have sought, with uneven or inadequate results, to respond to the challenges posed by this very grave threat. The Convention contains many provisions which refer to integrated approaches, methodologies, and specific and global measures which will make it possible to tackle desertification effectively and enhance efforts to mitigate the effects of drought. However, the Convention has yet to find a true identity, in the sense of the way in which it will be perceived by the actors concerned as an effective instrument for combating desertification and the effects of drought. It can hope to reach this goal only gradually, essentially by means of practical action combined with a substantial capacity for adaptation, and provided that major cooperating partners are fully involved and supportive of the efforts of the affected developing country Parties.

9. Indeed, the secretariat constitutes a key element of the machinery put in place by the Convention. Given the fact that desertification is only one of the major problems country Parties have to face, it seems important to have a secretariat which could perform, in the light of UNCCD provisions and COP decisions, key functions such as servicing the Parties, and facilitating upon request the efforts of the affected developing country Parties in specific activities under the

Convention. Further, the secretariat should continue its efforts to promote the comparative advantage of the Convention and to facilitate consultative processes leading to closer partnerships. This effort to link up with all actors including the United Nations specialized agencies, developed countries and international organizations, would be a consolidation of previous roles played by this secretariat over the years.

10. It is important to underline that the functions mentioned can only be discharged by taking into consideration not only the actual resources available to the secretariat in responding to demand for services. Account should also be taken of the perception of the needs of the affected developing country Parties.

11. Taking into consideration the above, the secretariat would like to continue working in a manner that helps restore an agro-ecological balance in the arid, semi-arid and dry sub-humid areas, to take the necessary steps towards strengthening the capabilities for implementation of the Convention at various levels, and to support consultation on the participation process as well as the establishment of partnership arrangements.

B. Components of the strategy

12. An important element of the secretariat's role would be to continue providing support to initiatives that may be taken by the Parties to ensure the effective implementation of the Convention. Of importance here are the primary positions of the specialized United Nations agencies and other international partners, which have complementary roles to play in UNCCD implementation.

13. The main elements of the secretariat's strategy in the coming years would be to facilitate the achievement of the objectives of the Convention, notably by:

- Making effective arrangements for and providing high-quality services and documentation to sessions of the COP and its subsidiary bodies;
- Ensuring the linkages with other sister conventions and deriving maximum benefit from the coordination of its activities with secretariats of other relevant international bodies;
- Strengthening public awareness;
- Contributing to building appropriate methodologies for participatory approaches;
- Ensuring the promotion of cooperation with public and private entities;
- Contributing to strengthening efforts to eradicate poverty in arid, semi-arid and dry sub-humid areas through a UNCCD approach;
- Continuing the promotion of the role of women and other major groups, including the non-governmental organizations community;
- Continuing the assistance to affected developing country Parties on request and in accordance with the UNCCD and decisions taken by the COP.

14. This is a huge task, and the secretariat can only discharge it by working progressively towards a well identified medium-term objective supported by the Conference of the Parties. It is expected therefore that efforts will be made to ensure that the role of "advocacy" and "synergy" of the secretariat can effectively be increased.

III. MAIN AREAS IN THE PROPOSED SECRETARIAT PROGRAMME OF ACTIVITIES

15. Since the adoption and entry into force of the Convention, the secretariat has been involved in various activities under the guidance of the country Parties. Reports on these activities have always been presented to the Parties during negotiation sessions and the first two sessions of the Conference of the Parties. The areas of action under the proposed programme are essentially a continuation of the secretariat's efforts to fulfil its functions in the context of the UNCCD. The said areas are as follows:

(a) Providing core secretariat services;

(b) Facilitating UNCCD implementation processes, including supporting participatory development;

(c) Cooperating with the secretariats of other sustainable development conventions;

(d) Promoting awareness creation and facilitating dissemination and exchange of information.

A. Providing core secretariat services

16. In keeping with the provisions of the Convention, the action undertaken under this heading will essentially be aimed at providing the Conference of the Parties and its subsidiary bodies with the services functionally devolving upon the secretariat. Such services include institutional, legal and logistic support for the smooth operation of the Conference of the Parties and its subsidiary bodies. They also include liaison and external relations functions, as well as administrative and budgetary functions. As requested by the Conference of the Parties, the secretariat will also continue to provide services to the Committee on Science and Technology (CST). Action will take the form of organizing periodic and ad hoc meetings of the CST; carrying out the studies requested by the CST; and facilitating the work of the CST between sessions.

B. Facilitating UNCCD implementation processes, including supporting participatory development

17. In the light of the Convention and the regional implementation annexes, the action undertaken in this field will be aimed at urging the Parties to the Convention to draw up action programmes at various levels. The secretariat will continue to facilitate the consultative processes, which will lead to the conclusion of partnership agreements and mobilize the commitments of major international

cooperation partners. The role of the secretariat will also be to take stock of action taken and evaluate progress made in the implementation of the Convention. For this purpose, the secretariat will work closely with the existing specialized agencies that are in a position to take part in the UNCCD process. In that sense, it is expected that more institutional arrangements will be concluded with other international agencies and organizations. The whole purpose here is to put at the service of affected developing country Parties the support that could facilitate their efforts to implement the Convention.

C. Cooperation with the secretariats of other sustainable development conventions

18. As stipulated in the relevant provisions of the Convention and decisions of the COP, the secretariat will continue the collaboration initiated with other convention secretariats and international organizations such as the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the Global Environment Facility (GEF). Arrangements have already been made with the secretariats of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and the Ramsar Convention. Similar arrangements are being finalized with the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), UNESCO, UNEP and the GEF. The rationale to promote cooperation with these bodies includes the fact that they present a convergence of objectives for achieving sustainable development. In the context of the UNCCD, this cooperation would contribute to a more effective implementation of the action programmes at various levels. Efforts will be made to develop in particular the following: capacity-building, exchange of information, networking, research and development, and the transfer, adaptation and development of technology.

D. Promoting awareness creation and facilitating dissemination and exchange of information

19. The secretariat proposes to continue creating awareness among actors and world public opinion regarding the challenges posed by the need to combat desertification and mitigate the effects of drought. In a media environment dominated by the globalization of the world economy, the problems relating to the long-term risks of environmental degradation remain widely ignored by public opinion. The objective is essentially to prompt collective awareness of the worldwide risks arising from desertification and the effects of drought. This action will be targeted on the main actors involved and the public at large. The limited financial resources allocated to efforts to combat desertification and the effects of drought constitute one of the most significant pointers to the marginalization of the "environmental emergency".

20. Pursuant to the Convention and under the guidance of the Conference of the Parties, the secretariat has the role of an ombudsman for the timely and efficient implementation of the Convention. It is the task of the secretariat to continue publicizing the text of the Convention and to draw the attention of the general public to the challenges presented by the UNCCD.

21. The secretariat would like to put the accent on disseminating information on the action taken so far. Hence the secretariat should address in particular the decision makers in the governmental apparatus as well as civil society and public opinion in general. Effort should be increased to introduce the subject of the Convention into the fields of politics, law, education, research, science and ethics. The Conference of the Parties would ensure that the secretariat is provided with adequate means to fully carry out these tasks and thereby promote the effective implementation of the Convention.

IV. OUTLINE OF THE PROGRAMME OF ACTIVITIES FOR THE SECRETARIAT

22. In line with the provisions of the Convention and decisions of the COP, the secretariat can only stimulate most of the proposed activities. Most of these activities are to be carried out by the Parties themselves.

A. Institutional, legal and logistic support provided to the Conference of the Parties and its subsidiary bodies

23. The provision of institutional and logistic support for the organization of the Conference of the Parties and its subsidiary bodies, is a fundamental task of the secretariat. These activities involve the preparation of reports before and after the sessions as well as the activation of a permanent system for monitoring and evaluating the application of the Convention. This would also include support to the CST by creating contacts with research institutions and facilitating linkages between the CST and the international scientific community. The secretariat will also continue to provide legal services for issues raised by the implementation of the Convention.

B. Liaison and external relations

24. The secretariat is the appropriate body to facilitate the initiatives required for the launching of the processes of integration of effort to combat desertification as a specific dimension of almost all development programmes in arid, semi-arid and dry sub-humid areas. Based on the previous work undertaken in this area, the secretariat will continue to discharge its functions in close contact with existing institutions that are involved in the UNCCD related activities. The external relations functions will also comprise the information, communication and consultation services described in other sections of the proposed programmes of work.

C. Evaluation of progress made in the implementation of the Convention

25. Evaluation of progress made in the implementation of the Convention is also one of the secretariat's basic functions. The secretariat's task here would be to collect and analyse data reflecting progress made in the implementation of the Convention. The objective would be to serve the needs of various actors for reliable information on the trend of desertification. In so doing, the secretariat will facilitate and support the effective assessment of progress towards attaining the objectives of the Convention. It has to be noted however, that this activity requires the full support of the Conference of the Parties and the involvement of various specialized agencies and institutions.

D. Facilitating UNCCD implementation processes, including supporting participatory development

(a) Contributions to promoting consistency between national action programmes and the approaches recommended in the Convention

26. In partnership with other institutions, the secretariat would have the task of promoting consistency between the national action programmes to be drawn up by the Parties. The role of the secretariat here is mainly to assist, on request, the organization of seminars and workshops; stimulate efforts to tackle issues arising in terms of the legislative and regulatory frameworks; promote participatory pilot projects for local development; and assist national coordinating bodies to fulfil their obligations under the Convention. This support could take the form of assistance in preparing national reports, capacity-building, and formulating specific projects related to the national action programme processes.

(b) Fostering consultative meetings and forums

27. The secretariat will continue to stress the need for support towards a full implementation of the Convention, especially in affected developing country Parties. It is the secretariat's task to recall that the Convention provides a unique opportunity to establish partnership agreements and coherence by bringing together all major players to support anti-desertification activities. It is crucial therefore that the secretariat explore further with the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) and the Global Mechanism ways and means to facilitate the implementation of the Convention in the framework of specific arrangements. The secretariat will also develop and strengthen its cooperation with other partners including the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), UNDP, UNEP, UNESCO, the World Bank, the World Meteorological Organization (WMO), regional development banks and other financing institutions.

(c) Specific contributions to help in the preparation of subregional and regional action programmes

28. The secretariat will continue to facilitate activities upon request to assist the subregional and regional organizations, in the context of the UNCCD. This support could take the form of facilitating the organization of meetings, seminars and workshops; facilitating the mobilization of expertise likely to assist in the identification of priorities; formulating specific projects; and monitoring and evaluating action programmes.

(d) Support for interregional initiatives

29. The secretariat will continue to support interregional initiatives as it has begun to do, by organizing the consultative meetings, which aim at promoting cooperation among regions. At this stage, important steps have been taken by the country Parties concerned towards closer cooperation between Asia and Africa; Africa and Latin America and the Caribbean; and Central Asia, the Caucasus and Eastern Europe.

(e) Supporting participatory development

30. The strengthening of cooperation with non-governmental organizations constitutes one of the activities of the secretariat. However, if this cooperation is to be developed, the approach to mobilize non-governmental organizations would be to pass on the message relating to the existing networks of institutions involved in environmental issues.

E. Facilitating dissemination and exchange of information

(a) Creation of awareness among actors and public opinion

31. Creation of awareness among actors and public opinion in general is a fundamental dimension of the UNCCD process. The public at large should be informed of the risks posed by desertification and the effects of drought. It should also be persuaded that it has a role to play by contributing to currents of opinion and taking initiatives in support. The creation of this awareness involves a public information policy which is consistent and multifaceted. Such a policy could be based on the production of information material aimed at the general public, the dissemination of educational material for use by teachers, press campaigns and a permanent interaction with the media.

(b) Production of information material

32. The secretariat will continue the efforts already undertaken to produce information material. It will include in particular a quarterly newsletter, press releases, publications on evaluations and studies, programmes for radio and television, information tools for the public (kits for spreading information about the Convention, posters, etc.).

(c) Establishment of a reference unit

33. This unit will include an internal library with the possibility of consulting documentary references over the Internet. It will also include a computerized system for access to the main databanks dealing with the issues covered by the Convention. It should be noted that the secretariat has become a recipient of information and that it is therefore acquiring a reference collection of general interest.

(d) Establishment of an information and communication system

34. The secretariat has developed an information and communication system based on Internet technologies. Electronic networks have been developed, particularly in Latin America and the Caribbean. It might be expanded by devising specific programmes to help national focal points and other participants involved to acquire appropriate equipment and training in its use. The information "products" offered to the Parties might include specific databanks dealing with the activities of the secretariat, the Conference of the Parties and the subsidiary bodies, interactive information systems on regional activities to implement the Convention (electronic regional forums, country information networks, etc.), and networking of the institutions and agencies expected to cooperate under the Convention's regional action programmes to combat desertification.

V. CONCLUSION

35. The implementation of the proposed programme for the biennium 2000-2001 should be seen as a consolidation of the previous activities in which the secretariat has been involved since the adoption of the Convention: they have aimed at promoting the Convention and facilitating the formulation and implementation of the action programmes under the guidance of the COP. The activities undertaken by the secretariat have always been initiated at the request of the country Parties and within the limits of the functions of the secretariat.

36. The programme before you aims at providing a comprehensive picture of the secretariat's role during the years to come and specific activities to be envisaged in the context of the implementation of the Convention, especially in affected developing country Parties.

37. It is to be noted that the activities envisaged can only succeed if the secretariat continues to mobilize collaboration and appropriate support of the United Nations specialized agencies, relevant international organizations and the non-governmental community. Efforts made by the secretariat to support the UNCCD processes could be evaluated periodically by the Parties.

38. The Conference of the Parties may wish to consider the proposed programme for the next two years and provide guidance to the secretariat in the areas of activity outlined in this document.

Annex I

COUNTRY PARTIES AND REGIONAL GROUPS
WHICH HAVE SUBMITTED THEIR CONTRIBUTIONS

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* Eleven contributions have been received. These submissions are attached.

Annex II

SUBMITTED CONTRIBUTIONS

Paper No. 1 **Argentina**

Suggestions concerning the medium-term strategy for the secretariat of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification

Since the document specifies the functions of the secretariat of the Convention to Combat Desertification in relation to the various aspects involved in desertification, the structure of the document should directly reflect the priorities applied by the secretariat in discharging its functions.

It is, we feel, essential to give priority to the indispensable function of coordination and convening of meetings performed by the secretariat, and for this the first pillar, "Providing core secretariat services" to the Conference and its subsidiary bodies, with the activities proposed to that end, is pivotal.

Since the Convention lays down that subregional and regional action programmes are "the central element of the strategy to combat desertification and mitigate the effects of drought" (part III, section I, article 9), and since such programmes fall within the competence of the national, subregional and regional focal points, we suggest that the fourth pillar, "Capacity-building for national focal points leadership" in the process of implementing the Convention, and the activities corresponding thereto, should be given the rank of second pillar of the proposals contained in the programme of strategies for the secretariat.

Accordingly, with regard to item D: "Programme areas in respect of capacity-building for national focal points", it is suggested that paragraph 42, referring to "development of an information system" (currently subparagraph (d) of that paragraph), should be reformulated to include the term training. The wording suggested for paragraph 42 is "Development of an information and training system capable of responding to the needs of national personnel", so that it would be the national coordination centres which would carry out the activities specified in subparagraphs (a), (b) and (c) of the said paragraph 42.

Thus, this specific activity of support from the secretariat for the regional centres will promote the concept of delegation, strengthening the national centres, which would accordingly be able to take responsibility for the activity proposed as item C.2, "Programme areas in respect of supporting participatory development and involvement of civil society: Promotion of methodologies, experiments and grass-roots initiatives aimed at the practical application of the participatory processes and the 'local government' approaches", it being the task of the secretariat to support but not implement that activity while the selection and development of methodologies would be the responsibility of the national coordinating centre.

Regarding item E, "Programme areas in relation to scientific and technological services", a question arises as to the justification (in terms of level of need) for what is specified in sub-item 3: "Establishment and activation of a core scientific group within the secretariat", given that the specific activities developed in the

scientific and technological field are carried out by the committee concerned, the secretariat's role being the provision of support and follow-up for its activities.

Again, we suggest consolidating into a single sub-item paragraphs 48 and 49 under sub-item E.4, "Contribution to the development of knowledge in specific areas of study and support for the thematic research programmes undertaken at the regional or subregional level", together with E.1, "Establishment of support for the Committee on Science and Technology", since the substantive activities in this area are carried out by that Committee.

With regard to item F, "Programme activities in relation to dissemination of information and exchange of information", and specifically to sub-item 1, "Creation of awareness among actors and public opinion in general", it is not made clear whether the press office it is proposed to establish in order to create awareness among the general public in furtherance of the implementation of the Convention would be, in respect of its functions, an office of the secretariat in fulfilment of its basic objective of acting as a "documentation centre at the service of the Parties to the Convention", and would function as part of the secretariat although it would be located in some African country as mentioned in the document, or whether it would be an independent centre.

In the former case, fuller consideration should be given to the idea of locating it in some country and not at the secretariat's own headquarters. Were it to be independent, it is suggested that it should perform its functions in a country whose National Action Plan is in operation, so that the office would be an additional factor in the implementation of the Plan, strengthening that instrument and reinforcing the application of the Convention in that country through a new activity.

To sum up, it is suggested in this initial analysis that the primary objective of furthering the application of the Convention on the secretariat's part should be achieved through promotional and support activities aimed at strengthening national, subregional and regional action programmes through their national coordination centres, with encouragement for greater involvement at various levels. We therefore suggest that, in pursuance of the primary objective indicated, the secretariat give priority to its basic functions of coordination and of convening meetings, which cannot be delegated, and which are essential to ensuring more effective operation of the system.

Paper No. 2 **Canada**

CONVENTION TO COMBAT DESERTIFICATION

Medium-term strategy of the secretariat (ICCD/COP(2)/6)

INTRODUCTION

The secretariat played a pivotal role in the coordination of the negotiations and the adoption of the Convention and, more recently, in promoting its ratification and implementation by United Nations Member countries. Now that the implementation of the Convention has started and the global mechanism is in operation, the secretariat has tried to define its medium-term strategy the better to guide its activities. At the second meeting of the Conference of the Parties (COP) to the Convention to Combat Desertification (CCD) an examination by the Conference of the medium-term strategy of the secretariat (ICCD/COP(2)/6) gave rise to discussions on the secretariat's role and functions. The developing countries proved in general favourable to the strategy as presented by the secretariat. For their part, the countries of the OECD, including Canada, put forward certain reservations since in some respects the strategy accorded the secretariat a heightened role in relation to the one defined in the Convention, which might lead to duplication of activities and entail substantial costs. The Conference of the Parties therefore deferred the consideration of the strategy till its third meeting and invited the Parties to present their viewpoints before 30 April 1999.

CANADA'S POSITION

1. While we recognize that the secretariat has a part to play in relation to the three idées-force promoted by the strategy and set out in paragraph 9, namely to "become a source of reference" for exchange of information, promote "awareness-creation among actors and public opinion" concerning the problems of desertification and "serve as a driving force for the creation of synergies in the context of cooperation at the global, regional and national levels", the primary role of the secretariat is to provide support for the COP and its subsidiary bodies. In setting out the mandate given to the secretariat (II (A), para. 8), the document recognizes that its role is a servicing one and that it is not an operational body. Nonetheless, several features of the strategy are clearly of an operational nature and go beyond the mandate provided for in the Convention, in particular in article 23 (functions of the secretariat) and in annexes I (art. 18), II, (art. 8) and III (art. 7).

2. The strategy paints a maximalist picture of what the secretariat's role might be, without taking sufficient account of the part played by other bodies, in particular the global mechanism, the Committee on Science and Technology (CST), the United Nations agencies and other intergovernmental organizations, or the direct role played by the Parties themselves. Were that strategy put into effect, it would inevitably lead to duplication of activities with those other bodies and would create, in all practical respects, a new operational agency.

3. Of course, under article 23 (2)(g) the Parties can entrust the secretariat with functions other than those already provided for in the Convention.

Nevertheless, with the implementation of the Convention only now beginning, we should confine ourselves in principle to the functions provided for in the Convention, namely:

(a) Main function: servicing the institutional bodies (COP, CST and ad hoc groups);

(b) On request, assisting affected developing countries in the compilation of information and preparation of reports (art. 23 (2) (c)), facilitating, in cooperation with other agencies, the provision of technical assistance for preparing reports (art. 26 (7)), and drawing up a synthesis of the reports;

(c) Coordination of activities with other competent agencies (UNDP, UNEP, etc.): the secretariat could play a liaison role in helping the COP to ensure that there is no duplication of efforts, by keeping well informed and reporting to the COP on the initiatives of other agencies involved in programmes to combat desertification, such as UNEP (United Nations Environment Programme), UNDP (United Nations Development Programme), IFAD (International Fund for Agricultural Development), CILSS (Permanent Inter-State Committee on Drought Control in the Sahel), the World Bank and the regional development banks.

(d) The secretariat has also, of course, some part to play in promoting the Convention as proposed in the document (awareness creation, etc.)

4. In section 11 (A), paragraph 9, it is stated that the secretariat will become a source of scientific and technical analyses for the Parties. While the secretariat might indeed have a part to play in facilitating exchange of scientific and technical information, the function of scientific and technical analysis would properly belong to the CST or to other specialized bodies.

5. Concerning the six pillars of the programme of action:

(a) First pillar (para. 20) and paragraphs 26-28: this first pillar, "providing core secretariat services to the COP and subsidiary bodies", is the main function of the secretariat. It includes institutional, legal and logistic support, external relations, monitoring of progress, administrative functions and budget management. Some tasks described under the other pillars could therefore be classified under this head. The reference to "the activation of a permanent system for monitoring and evaluating the application of the Convention" gives rise to misgivings. The secretariat does not possess the technical expertise to conduct such an evaluation itself. This type of work is the domain rather of specialized organizations such as UNEP and UNDP, which have the requisite expertise for monitoring and evaluation. On the other hand, the secretariat has a part to play in matters concerning the compilation and transmission of information (via Internet, etc.) on the status of countries in respect of the preparation and implementation of national action plans. As suggested in paragraph 29, the secretariat will prepare overviews of the reports of Parties on the application, under articles 16 and 17, of the procedure for communication of information and monitoring of implementation. These functions do not call for "strengthening and specialization of the secretariat" as suggested in paragraph 29. The secretariat should coordinate the activities of the various bodies involved in combating desertification, as proposed in paragraph 27.

(b) Second pillar (paras. 21 and 34-35): the secretariat's role in this sphere is a supporting rather than an operational one. The reference in paragraph 34 to "the support it will be expected to provide in the preparation of the national programmes of action" is open to fairly broad interpretation, particularly as later on the document speaks of strengthening of training capacities, a more operational role. Project proposals should be initiated by the countries affected by desertification or by regional agencies and routed directly to financing agencies.

The role proposed in paragraph 31 is connected with the "liaison and external relations functions" under the first pillar. Paragraph 32 proposes that the secretariat should be assigned a role that conflicts with the mandate of the global mechanism.

(c) Third pillar: work in the field to encourage the involvement of civil society, etc. is extremely important but belongs rather to other organizations such as UNDP and the Parties themselves. The secretariat should not have any operational role in the field, for that would mean duplication of activities with UNDP and other international organizations and with the Parties themselves. As for the role of cooperation with NGOs (paras. 37 and 38), it is relevant insofar as it falls within the "liaison and external relations" function proposed in paragraph 31 (first pillar).

(d) Fourth pillar (paras. 23 and 41 and 44): capacity-building is obviously desirable but it is UNDP and other operational agencies which should take responsibility for it, jointly with the developed countries.

(e) Fifth pillar (paras. 24 and 44-49): one of the secretariat's roles is servicing the CST. It must ensure the establishment of an information network (on Internet, etc.) involving all competent organizations at both national and international level to disseminate scientific and technical information together with general information on the implementation of the Convention. This should not be confused with the CST's own role of providing the Parties with specialized advice. It would therefore not be appropriate to set up a permanent multidisciplinary core group of scientific advisers.

(f) Sixth pillar: exchange of information is an appropriate and necessary role. This function can, however, be performed without setting up a cumbersome and costly internal structure (press office, complex information and communications system, etc.). The scope of this function remains to be determined by the Parties.

6. Facilitating the involvement of women should be an integral part of the strategy, particularly with regard to communications (sixth pillar), external relations (first pillar), etc.

7. Canada agrees that the results of the programme activities should be evaluated at the fourth session of the COP before final decisions are taken. The Conference will have to consider what indicators should be used to measure progress.

8. Paragraph 48 should be redrafted to reflect the decisions taken on the scope of the CST's terms of reference.

9. Paragraph 61 should be deleted or redrafted to harmonize better with the introductory part, objectives and principles of the Convention. The language used, e.g.: "Henceforth the laws of nature apply to the political level; in ecological matters, sovereignty becomes worldwide by necessity. In the long run it will be necessary to consider steps to punish the destruction of the environment or to better judge attacks on the equilibria of the biosphere. Consideration of the legal aspects of the international protection of the environment will no doubt continue in the coming years", diverges from the spirit of the Convention, which does not assign itself a controlling and policing role but, rather, aims at better coordination of efforts, capacity-building, creation of a conducive environment for action, etc.

Paper Nr. 3 **Cook Islands**

CONVENTION TO COMBAT DESERTIFICATION

MEDIUM TERM STRATEGY

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Immigration would like to make to following comments on the Medium Term Strategy of the Secretariat.

As a State Party to the Convention, we feel that the language used is in certain areas tediously wordy, introducing several ideas that could be effectively dealt with in shorter and succinct sentences identifying each idea. We would prefer that the language be simplified, so that interested Parties who do not necessarily deal with desertification issues on a daily basis like government Ministers can pick up the Strategy and be able to read and comprehend the document without any great difficulty. For example:

- In paragraph 12 - please define "empirical delimitation"
- Paragraph 22 - last sentence - "…application of measures directed towards this end, both at the national and regional and at the local level." - to be consistent with the Strategy, we propose that local level be deleted and replaced with national level.
- Paragraph 20 - fourth sentence - we propose that the reference to the word "kingpin" be deleted and be replaced by "…the secretariat would appear to provide key inputs in a network of interactions…"
- In paragraph 27, please define the term "subsidiarities"
- In paragraph 27 - last sentence - the conjunction "and" is missing from between the words "…the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) [*and*] national organizations."
- In paragraph 45, please define what a "pole" of reference means. Is there an alternative term to "pole"?

Paper Nr. 4

Fiji

WRITTEN SUBMISSION BY THE UNCCD PARTIES ON THE MEDIUM TERM STRATEGY OF THE SECRETARIAT

The Government of Fiji endorses the Medium Term Strategy prepared by the Secretariat and trust that it would provide a valuable platform in the implementation of the Convention's programme proposals.

Paper Nr. 5 **Italy**

MEDIUM TERM STRATEGY FOR THE PERMANENT SECRETARIAT

COP II decided to re-examine doc. ICCD/COP(2)/6 on the bases of that document and of suggestions or observations received by the Secretariat before April 30, 1999. To this effect we offer the following considerations and suggestions.

Document 6 must be praised as a sincere and concrete effort to look into the future of the Secretariat role within the process of the enforcement of the Convention. However, it seems to take as a starting point the activity that the Secretariat developed in the preliminary phase of the Convention's existence when neither the Global Mechanism nor the Committee on Science and Technology were in existence or had started to function. The consequence of this is that document 6 appears to be in several aspects too ambitious or to run the risk of creating unneeded duplications or overlapping. Thus:

Point 7 states that the Secretariat is a central element of the system created by the Convention while for the Parties the implementation of the Convention plays only a marginal role. Such a statement is evidently going beyond what it probably meant to say, i.e. that the Secretariat is one of the very important organs of the system created by the Convention in order to allow the Parties to better implement it in full respect of their indications. Point 7 should therefore be rephrased accordingly. The same should be said for point 8, not to give the impression that what is suggested is to give the Secretariat a mandate not in conformity with the main objectives fixed by art.23 of the Convention.

Point 12 can be retained only as far as the first sentence, while only the last sentence of point 13 is acceptable if conveniently rephrased. The assertion contained in point 15 that the Secretariat should become the "propeller" of the strategic element needs to be modified in the sense that is should be an "element of sensibilization".

The fifth of the six pillars set by document 6 appears to overlap the field of responsibility of the Committee on Science and Technology, to which point 24 makes, instead, a correct reference, as having a proactive role in all the matters that fall within its competence.

The assertion contained in point 30 that the Secretariat "refuse" to become a bureaucratic institution is evidently not condivisible, because it contradicts the main idea expressed by art.23 of the Convention which clearly and specifically indicates the tasks that the Secretariat is called to perform. It is true that several geographical Annexes assign to the Secretariat also other and more active roles but these should be envisaged in a different and subsidiary context. Otherwise it would not be possible to understand why art.23 so precisely indicates specific

tasks and only mentions "other" possible tasks at the very end of the list. To accept the proposal of document 6 would completely change the "philosophy" on which the Secretariat's tasks have been foreseen by the Convention.

The proposal contained in point 47 runs the risk of setting up a new organ that would be an unneeded duplication of the already existing ones, while being at the same time a complicating factor and possible source of more expenses.

Finally, points from 59 to 62 seem superfluous and somewhat too much dictated by considerations of a "philosophical" and methodological character to include them in a text that should be as concrete and clear as possible in as much as it must define the precise scope of the tasks that the Secretariat is called to perform by the fundamental and already above mentioned art.23 of the Convention, point 2 letters from (a) to (f).

Paper Nr. 6 **Japan**

JAPAN'S COMMENTS ON THE MEDIUM TERM STRATEGY OF THE SECRETARIAT FOR THE CONVENTION TO COMBAT DESERTIFICATION

April 1999

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan

1. Based on the notion that the Secretariat itself should fulfill the function of providing comprehensive support to the parties to the Convention, the medium-term strategy developed and submitted to the Second Conference of the Parties by the Secretariat proposes expanding the role of the Secretariat to include (1) becoming a reference source and a source of scientific and technical analysis, (2) become active in generating greater public awareness, and (3) serving as a driving force in eliciting cooperative action (synergies) to ensure the implementation of the Convention at the national, regional, and global levels. The medium-term strategy presents concrete plans of action in each of these areas.

2. However, as indicated in the medium-term strategy (ICCD/COP(2)/6,paragraph 8), the Secretariat's mandate does not make it an operational body. Furthermore, under the terms of the Convention, the functions described above are assigned to the Committee on Science and Technology and the Global Mechanism or are treated as the duties of the parties to the Convention. Consequently, the Secretariat need not become the essential body for all such matters. In light of the fact that the functions described above are already allocated under the Convention in the manner just stated, a medium-term strategy setting up the Secretariat itself as a full-scale operational body is inappropriate in the first place. Moreover, any scheme whereby the Secretariat would duplicate the duties of other bodies should be avoided.

3. The following fundamental points are essential to the preparation of a medium-term strategy.

i. The foremost priority should be to ensure that the Convention Secretariat duly performs its basic duties as clearly stipulated in Article 23, paragraph 2 of the Convention. In light of delays in the prior distribution of documents from the Secretariat pertaining to the Second Conference of the Parties to the Convention, for instance, the Secretariat's performance in fulfilling its basic responsibilities, as set forth in Article 23, paragraph 2(a), could be regarded as less than adequate. Under the circumstances, it would be inadvisable to add to the duties already borne by the Secretariat.

ii. The Convention Secretariat should clarify the allocation of duties to the Committee on Science and Technology, the Global Mechanism, and the other bodies established by the Convention. In addition, as stated in Article 23, paragraph 2(d) of the convention, the Secretariat is expected to coordinate its activities with the secretariats of other relevant international bodies and conventions. In order

to make efficient use of the limited resources available and produce the greatest possible results in the allocation of duties to the bodies mentioned, the Secretariat should (1) make the greatest possible use of the knowledge and experience of organizations that are already conducting activities related to the effort to combat desertification and, (2) in order to avoid duplicating the activities of these organisations identify the various bodies involved in efforts to combat desertification, ascertain the results they have achieved, and conduct a strategic investigation to determine which bodies might participate and how they might share in the allocation of duties pursuant to the implementation of the Convention.

4. With regard to the preparation of a medium-term strategy, the document ICCD/COP(2)/6 is unsuitable as a basis for discussion, for the reasons stated in section 2 above. The following are specific comments on the document in question.

i. Paragraph 11 (a) contains a reference to "degraded areas" an expression which would include degraded land in areas other than those to which the Convention applies, as stipulated in Article 1, sections (a) and (h). The wording should be changed to "in degraded land in arid, semi-arid and dry sub-humid areas".

ii. With regard to paragraph 34, in recognition of the importance of ensuring that the Global Mechanism operates effectively and to avoid duplicating other efforts, the respective functions of the Global Mechanism and the Convention Secretariat should be more clearly delineated.

iii. Paragraph 39 discusses the participation of the Convention Secretariat in the monitoring of particular pilot projects, the direct promotion of certain innovative projects, and other such activities. This would lead to the enlargement of the Secretariat's workload, however, so the necessity of direct involvement by the Secretariat in carrying out such projects should be carefully examined.

iv. Paragraph 47 contains a proposal under which a core scientific group would be established at the headquarters of the Secretariat for the purpose of "servicing" the Committee on Science and Technology. Scientific and technical matters, however, are the responsibility of the Committee on Science and Technology (as stated in Article 24 of the Convention), and since the services that the Secretariat is called upon to provide in Article 23, paragraph 2(a) are understood to be primarily practical duties, such as the distribution of documents and the like, the necessity of establishing such a group within the Secretariat should be carefully examined.

v. Paragraph 50 contains the suggestion that the Convention Secretariat could plan the creation of a press office to promote public awareness. While we consider it worthwhile to disseminate information in the Secretariat's possession related to the implementation of the Convention, the necessity of establishing a separate press office for this purpose should be carefully examined, especially

since information could be effectively disseminated by the Secretariat via the Internet.

vi. Paragraph 52 refers to the Convention Secretariat's plan to set up a reference centre. It is more advisable, however, to make the greatest possible use of existing facilities and resources. (There will be no need to establish such a centre if, for example, reference information is made available via the Internet, as suggested in comment 7 below). Furthermore, since both paragraph 52 and paragraph 53 are concerned with the provision of information systems, the concerns discussed in both paragraphs should be studied together, in an effort to make the most efficient use of the available resources.

vii. Paragraph 53 includes mention of the fact that the Convention Secretariat has begun setting up an information and communication system utilizing the Internet. In order to ensure that this system is fully utilized, consideration should be given to providing more information, including information about the preparation of action programmes and the status of implementation, as well as the details of the action programmes themselves.

5. Japan would like to offer a cautionary reminder regarding budgetary matters. Under the financial rules, the budget for the convention Secretariat must be discussed and adopted on a biannual basis at the Conference of the Parties to the Convention, and approval will not automatically be granted for a budget covering the activities of the Secretariat included in its medium-term strategy.

Paper No. 7 **Switzerland**

CONVENTION TO COMBAT DESERTIFICATION (CCD)

Comments of Switzerland on the "medium-term strategy for the secretariat", secretariat document ICCD/COP(2)/6

In pursuance of decision 7/COP.2 Switzerland submits hereinunder its comments and suggestions.

General remarks on the approach taken to the strategy for the secretariat of CCD

In the text of the CCD it is mainly article 23 which determines the functions of the secretariat; other competencies of the "servicing" type, in the administrative sense, are set out on an ad hoc basis in other articles (art. 9; art. 22.4, 5 and 7; art. 30). The annexes assign another, more substantial function to the secretariat: at the request of affected country Parties the permanent secretariat may facilitate the convocation of coordination meetings (art. 18 for Africa, art. 8 for Asia and art. 7 for Latin America).

The functions listed in article 23 of the CCD are practically identical to those assigned to the secretariats of the other Rio Conventions, the Convention on Biological Diversity (CDB) and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) (art. 24 of the CDB and art. 8 of the UNFCCC). These conventions also make ad hoc provision for other servicing functions, in the administrative sense, similar to those specified in the CCD.

The CCD, like the CDB and the UNFCCC, provides (art. 23 (g)) that the secretariat should "perform such other secretariat functions as may be determined by the Conference of the Parties". The legal procedure for modifying the competencies of the secretariat, i.e. whether by decision or amendment, is not stipulated. The practice in the case of the CDB and UNFCCC is to grant additional competencies to the secretariat case by case and through the mechanism of decisions. Such functions have, moreover, afterwards been regularly specified in the decisions of subsequent COPs. In sum, the CDB and the UNFCCC have a progressive approach whereby the secretariat, at the request of the COP, proposes in a document a basic piece of work and asks, if it sees fit, that it should be entrusted with additional functions to help it in the performance of that work; then, if the COP considers that the work must be done, it endorses the proposal and, if deemed appropriate, assigns additional functions to the secretariat or to another organ of the Convention. Clearly the functions of the secretariat are going to evolve and the text of the CCD provides - as do those of the CDP and the UNFCCC - that the COP may assign other functions than those provided for when the legal instrument was adopted. Such a progressive evolution, as instituted by the two sister Conventions of the CCD, offers the following obvious advantages:

1. The Parties know where they are going: the text of the Rio Conventions needs to be clarified in respect both of the content of the obligations laid upon the Parties and of the institutional arrangements (What mechanisms must be established to ensure compliance? Which organ does what?). The progressive approach allows the Parties to keep better track of developments on all the uncertain points in the legal instrument in line with the evolution of external circumstances.

2. A parallel evolution takes place in the content of the obligations and the institutional structure under the Convention: it must first be decided what has to be done before deciding who must do it, lest through the effect of the assignment of competencies the Parties in fact develop/modify the content of their obligations (and hence of the Convention) without fully realizing it.

3. The progressive approach makes it possible to determine more precisely which organ is best placed to perform a function. Thus the institutional framework has more chance of being clearly defined, helping to avoid duplications and gaps.

4. The Parties have better control over finances: under the CDB and the UNFCCC the COP may sometimes have to determine, when it decides to assign a supplementary function to the secretariat, whether or not additional means must be made available by the Parties (in the budget or on a voluntary basis).

The approach proposed by the CCD secretariat in the "medium-term strategy" cannot offer the same advantages, presenting as it does a framework of assignment of functions and fields of activity going far beyond the provisions of the Convention.

In decision 7/COP.2 the COP requested the secretariat to prepare a new document, in the drafting of which it will be important to take account of the following principles:

- the COP is the supreme organ of the Convention;

- the functions of the secretariat are laid down in the Convention: they consist in "servicing" functions, i.e. not in operational functions unless expressly provided for;

- the COP may assign other functions to the secretariat: under its decision-making powers, or by an amendment to the CCD if those new functions represent a modification of the Convention. In the case of an amendment, there is a risk when it comes to ratification;

- the implementation of the CCD is the responsibility of the Parties;

- if the COP requires an analysis or study to be conducted by the secretariat, the latter must submit a document in support of its proposals, i.e. the secretariat must not simply issue a judgement but establish facts, backed by justifications. Thus, before determining that the Parties need a servicing body, the secretariat must prove it; similarly, before proposing new functions for consideration, the secretariat must demonstrate that those new functions are not only necessary in application of, but compatible with the content of the CCD or of a decision of the COP (solidly based in law); that with the current institutional structure there exists a gap or overlapping of competency that must be eliminated; and that the secretariat is the body best placed to perform those new functions.

On the basis of those principles and applying a progressive approach, the secretariat could submit a medium-term strategy based on the text of the CCD or of the decisions adopted at each COP, in which the COP would also have to decide on the financial implications. For example, the secretariat could propose a strategy for putting into effect article 23.2 (c) in which it would suggest to the COP how the "facilitation" of assistance could, on request, be achieved; the same would apply to "facilitation", on request, of the convocation of consultative processes under the regional Annexes. The functions of the secretariat in those two instances obviously need clarifying.

Berne, 30 April 1999

Paper Nr. 8 **Turkey**

As a CCD Party, Turkey's opinions related to the Document with number ICCD/COP(2)/L.39 are as follows:

At 1st COP, according to Decision 10, it was suggested to discuss, whether it is necessary for additional procedures or institutional mechanisms, in order to be helpful for systematic review of the implementation of the Convention. At 1st COP, Republic of Tanzania representing Group 77 and China, suggested (A/AC.241/L.41) to found a committee named as "Committee on the Review of the Implementation of the Convention (CRIC)" so as to observe and evaluate the implementation of the Convention. This suggestion was repeated by Indonesia representing Group 77 and China during 2nd COP (ICCD/COP(2)/L.9).

It is approved to constitute the relevant committee that was supported during both 1st and 2nd COP. However, it will be more appropriate to determine the functions of this committee and the Secretariat so designated that duplications will never be seen.

Turkey's opinions related to the Documents ICCD/COP(2)/L.38 and ICCD/COP(2)/6 that concern Medium-term Strategy of the Secretariat are as follows:

Related documents are examined and they are generally found to be appropriate. In addition, Secretariat should aim to contribute to the solution of financial and strategically difficulties of especially developing countries where National Action Plans and Regional Programmes are being prepared.

Moreover, the role of the Secretariat in the development of Regional Programmes for Annex IV that also includes Turkey should be increased.

The Secretariat should also help to constitute necessary legal arrangements about combating desertification in Parties and it should co-operate with investing and implementing organizations in these countries.

Paper Nr. 9 **Uzbekistan**

Republic of Uzbekistan
Cabinet of Ministers
Main Administration of Hydrometeorology
(Glavgidromet)

Considering the solution T/COP.2 and the materials on "Medium term strategy of Secretariat" (ICCD/COP(2)/6), Glavgidromet of Republic of Uzbekistan supports the all strategic directions of Secretariat activities, concerning with the implementation of Convention to Combat Desertification and the suggestions on its program.

Glavgidromet approves the strategic directions of Secretariat on 1999-2000 period, six main directions of the program of actions, the scheme of program of actions of Convention Secretariat and also the objectivity's in the field of implementation of Convention and the role of secretariat in their realisation.

Glavgidromet considers that the realisation of Medium term strategy on practice with the help of new strategies, institutional situation, joint work and cooperation makes a valuable contribution to combat desertification and consequences of drought in all areas, subject to this process.

Paper Nr. 10 **European Community**

Submission by Germany
On behalf of the European Community and its Member States

1. The signing of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (CCD) in October 1994 clearly reflects the determination of the international community to give new impetus to internationally co-ordinated efforts for improving the quality of life of people who live in arid, semi-arid and dry sub-humid areas and are dependent on natural resources that are under threat of degradation.

2. To work towards this end as effectively as possible, the Convention, *inter alia*, defines and assigns specific roles and obligations to all the relevant players within the context of the Convention.

3. The Secretariat constitutes one prominent element of that framework. A separate provision of the convention deals exclusively with the responsibilities of the Permanent Secretariat (Article 23). It follows from this article that the Secretariat is mandated, first and foremost, to serve the Conference of the Parties (COP) and to interact, on their behalf, with other relevant international bodies and conventions. Six of the seven functions delineated in Article 23 relate to these kinds of "classic" convention secretariat functions. As the supreme authority, only the COP is entitled to assign additional tasks to the Permanent Secretariat (Article 23, para.2(g)). However, such additional tasks can only be defined and undertaken if the COP takes a formal and concrete decision on this matter.

4. The only provision which goes beyond such COP-related secretarial functions is Article 23, para.2(c). This provision authorises the Permanent Secretariat "*to facilitate assistance to affected developing country Parties, on request, particularly those in Africa, in the compilation and communication of information required under the Convention*". This provision should be seen in connection with the Convention's regional annexes for Africa, Asia and Latin America and the Caribbean. According to the relevant articles in these annexes[2], affected country Parties may, pursuant to article 23 of the Convention, request the Secretariat to facilitate the convocation of consultative processes at the national, sub-regional and regional level. These articles provide an exhaustive list of tasks with which the Parties referred to in the three annexes may entrust the Secretariat, namely (a) providing advice on the organisation of effective consultative/co-ordination arrangements, drawing on experiences from other such arrangements, (b) providing information to relevant bilateral and multilateral agencies concerning

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[2] Article 18, par.4/Africa Annex; Article 8, para.3/Asia Annex; Article 7, para.2/Latin America and the Caribbean Annex.

consultative/co-ordination meetings or processes, and encouraging their active involvement, and (c) providing other information that may be relevant in establishing or improving consultative arrangements/co-ordination processes.

5. The European Community and its Member States (EU) welcome the fact that some of these typical secretariat functions are indeed explicitly mentioned in document ICCD/COP(2)/6 as part of the first pillar, *Providing core secretariat services*. In paragraph 26, for example, it is highlighted that the provision of institutional and logistic support for the organisation of the Conference of the Parties is a fundamental task of the Secretariat. In addition, paragraph 28 emphasises that the Secretariat would have to ensure normal contacts with the secretariats of the main agencies involved in the Convention process as well as the principal non-governmental organisations. Paragraph 29, which deals with the Secretariat's role in evaluating the progress of Convention implementation, is yet another case in point. The EU reaffirms its conviction, as supported by Decision 11/COP.1, that the Secretariat is indeed the appropriate body to facilitate and support the effective assessment of progress towards attaining the objectives of the Convention.

6. The effective and timely discharge of these functions is a true challenge for the Secretariat. The EU wishes to express its appreciation to the Secretariat for all its efforts to fulfill this important mandate and urges it to continue these efforts vigorously. In the view of the EU, the Secretariat plays an essential role in *preparing the review of the implementation* of the Convention which is to be carried out by the COP. Through Decision 11/COP.1, the Secretariat has been commissioned to compile and synthesise the reports submitted by the analytical task in the sense of providing information on the progress made with regard to implementation by reporting, after the third ordinary session and following every subsequent ordinary session of the COP, on the conclusions of the review process. Furthermore, the Secretariat has to carry out the important task of *servicing the CST* in various areas. The EU acknowledges the previous work undertaken and supports continuous efforts of the Secretariat to effectively discharge this function by, *inter alia*, organising the periodic meetings, including the Bureau meeting (Decision 15/COP.1, para.9), as well as the forthcoming ad hoc panel meetings of the CST, by establishing contacts with existing research institutions which have the relevant information needed for the CST to work effectively, and by facilitating linkages between the CST and the international scientific community.

7. Apart from these core Secretariat functions, however, the EU is of the opinion that most of the remaining areas of intervention, as outlined in document ICCD/COP(2)/6, go beyond the set of functions the Convention deliberately devolves to the Secretariat. This assessment of the EU is described in more detail in Annex 1.

8. The EU wishes to contribute to determining the role of the Secretariat as the Convention matures and gradually enters into the phase of implementation. All such deliberations have to take into account the functions the Convention assigns to other players, in particular to the Parties themselves, the Convention bodies

(including the Global Mechanism), the existing national, sub-regional, international, intergovernmental, scientific and non-governmental organisations, information systems, clearing-houses as well as bilateral and multilateral financial mechanisms.

9. The EU could support the following forms of intervention to be carried out by the Secretariat:

(a) The Secretariat could function as an ***advocate*** in the sense of creating awareness for the strategic and innovative elements embodied in the Convention. Given the fact that the CCD is not yet sufficiently recognised as an important instrument for development planning and international co-operation by relevant national (e.g. ministries responsible for international development co-operation) and international bodies or processes, the Secretariat could, pursuant to Article 23. Para. 2.(g), be commissioned with very targeted outreach, information and sensitisation activities. This would help to tackle the visible obstacles to effectively implementing the Convention, such as the frequently missing link between the CCD process and decision-making on key issues of national development (e.g. sector policies) on the one hand and international development co-operation on the other. In practical terms, this could mean that the Secretariat tries to approach in good time established multilateral co-ordination mechanisms (such as UNDP Round Tables or Consultative Groups of the World Bank) so as to make sure that adequate attention be given to the cross-cutting issues of the CCD. This would also help to ensure that the strategic elements, the innovative approaches as well as the methodological framework which the CCD offers for other environmental Conventions are integrated into these various co-ordination and consultative processes.

(b) The Secretariat could play a facilitating role in terms of the ***exchange of*** relevant ***information*** between the crucial players within the CCD process ("information brokering"). The assignment of this responsibility would have to be well balanced, taking into full account the ongoing activities of other institutions and agencies so as to make sure that the Secretariat is put in a position to add value. For example, this could mean focusing on networking and on guiding those who need to gain access to the relevant sources by setting up "smart links".

10. The EU suggests that the third session of the COP might reach agreement on this item, on the basis of a realistic plan of concrete activities of the Secretariat over a fixed period in the areas of intervention outlined above. The EU would welcome the views of other parties on this suggestion.

Annex 1

Further deliberations of the European Community and its Member States (EU) on Document ICCD/COP(2)/6

In the view of the EU, most of the proposed areas of intervention as outlined in document ICCD/COP(2)/6 go beyond the set of functions the Convention assigns to the Secretariat.

1. For example, still under the umbrella of the core Secretariat services (pillar one), document ICCD/COP(2)/6 proposes, as a medium-term strategy, the setting up of a system for inter-agency co-ordination comprising various institutions and agencies. It is suggested that the CCD Secretariat be the catalyst within this new machinery. In the second pillar, *facilitating CCD implementation programming processes*, it is proposed that the Secretariat act as an intermediary in the process of consultation by, *inter alia*, organising and programming consultative meetings leading to partnership agreements (cf. paras. 21 and 34). Also, the Secretariat intends to play an active role in ensuring consistency between national programmes and the approaches recommended by the Convention (cf.para.33).

2. The EU is convinced that, first, there is no need to create a new "superstructure" for co-ordination of relevant organisations at the international level. Second, neither the spirit nor the letter of the Convention designate the Secretariat to take up co-ordinating functions at the national level. Rather, in appreciation of their sovereignty and in knowledge of their own capabilities, the Convention deliberately assigns these tasks of co-ordination and carrying out consultative processes to the ***affected country Parties*** and, as appropriate, to other existing bilateral and multilateral development agencies in light of the fact that those institutions have already gained a great deal of experience in this field (cf. Article 18, para. 1 and 3/Africa Annex; Article 8, para. 1 and 2/Asia Annex; Article 7, para. 1/Latin America and the Caribbean Annex). The Convention explicitly emphasises that in these processes the Secretariat may, on request, play a *supportive* role, namely by facilitating the convocation of such consultative processes and co-ordination meetings (cf. Article 18, para. 4/Africa Annex; Article 8, para. 3/Asia Annex; Article 7, par. 2/Latin America and the Caribbean Annex). To this end, the Secretariat shall, *inter alia*, provide advice on the organisation of effective consultative and co-ordination arrangement. However, the envisaged active role of the Secretariat in **organising and programming** these consultative meetings is clearly not in line with the provisions of the Convention.

3. This assessment also applies to pillars three, four and five of document ICCD/COP(2)/6.

4. As regards pillar three, *supporting participatory development and involvement of civil society*, it is undisputed that full participation of all stakeholders at all levels, particularly at the local level, constitutes one of the elementary guidelines and objectives of the Convention. However, with regard to attaining

progress in this area, the Convention explicitly refers to the Parties and not to the Secretariat. Parties shall, among other things, encourage non-governmental organisations as prominent advocates of civil society to support the elaboration, implementation and follow-up of national action programmes (cf. Article 9, para.3). The latter shall also focus on approaches to increasing the participation of local populations and communities, including more responsibility for management (cf. e.g. Article 8, para.2(c)/Africa Annex).

5. As far as pillar four, *capacity building for national focal points' leadership*, is concerned, document ICCD/COP(2)/6 suggests that the Secretariat be involved in designing specific training programmes and strategies for the development of human capacity to handle the tasks and obligations of the convention. In addition, it is proposed that the Secretariat becomes active in the mobilisation of financial resources to support the implementation of these training strategies.

6. The EU is of the opinion that this proposal is not in harmony with the provisions of the Convention. First, the Convention addresses the Parties and not the Secretariat to take the necessary operational steps to foster capacity building, through, for example, local people's full participation at all levels or by strengthening training and research capacity at the national level in the field of desertification and drought (cf. Article 19, para. 1(a), (b)). Second, the EU wants to recall decision 24/COP.1, through which the Parties mandate the Global Mechanism to facilitate the mobilisation of financial resources. In the view of the EU, this mandate also refers to facilitating the mobilisation of financial resources to support the implementation of certain kinds of capacity building efforts (cf. document ICCD/COP(2)/6, paras. 41 through 43).

7. In pillar five, *setting up appropriate mechanisms for user driven science and technology*, it is proposed that the Secretariat establish a network which embraces the relevant scientific and technological centres dealing with desertification issues (cf. para. 46). The EU is sceptical whether this can really be considered an area of intervention for the Secretariat. These concerns are expressed on the grounds that the Convention commits the Parties, first and foremost, to fully utilising relevant existing national, sub-regional, regional and international information systems and clearing-houses for the dissemination of information on available technologies (Article 18, para.1, (a)).

8. The EU also takes a reserved view of the idea of setting up a core scientific group at the headquarters of the Secretariat. The Convention is strongly committed to capitalising on existing institutions and sources of expertise, not least in order to avoid duplication. The EU takes the view that there is, in fact, enough scientific expertise available (e.g. through institutions such as OSS, CGIAR, UNDP, etc) which the Secretariat could readily draw upon with regard to its recognised role in servicing the Committee on Science and Technology (CST).

9. The same reasoning holds for the EU's reservations towards the proposal within the sixth pillar, facilitating knowledge development and information exchange, that a reference centre be established in the Secretariat (cf. para. 52).

Paper Nr. 11 **The Group of 77 and China**

BACKGROUND

1- The Second Session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification held in Dakar, SENEGAL, from 30 November to 11 December 1998 adopted Decision 7/COP.2 on "Medium-Term Strategy of the Secretariat". The Conference of the Parties on operative paragraph 2 of the Decision "Requests the Executive Secretary to elaborate a new document on the Medium-Term Strategy of the Secretariat based on comments, suggestions and proposals made during the Second Session of the Conference of the Parties as well as on written submissions by the Parties no later than 30 April 1999, and to submit that document and a compendium to the Conference of the Parties for consideration",

2- Pursuant to the Decision 7/COP.2, G77 and CHINA would like to contribute to the elaboration of a new document on the Medium-Term Strategy of the UNCCD Secretariat on written submissions.

INTRODUCTION

1- This document presents a strategic framework for the UNCCD Secretariat in implementing the Convention provisions, and the Conference of the Parties decisions, including its subsidiary bodies recommendations.

2- The purpose of a strategic framework is to serve as a tool in the planning of the Permanent Secretariat activities. Specifically, it provides Secretariat with guidelines for designing and implementing of a programme of action. The strategic framework will also serve as an information source for Parties and all those interested in Secretariat activities.

3- Finally, the strategic framework should be valid for overtime but the programme of action should be update time to time.

4- The need for Permanent Secretariat to develop this strategy reflects five main ideas:

- the interim Secretariat has completed its work in discharging the role assigned to it to help in preparing for application of the Convention and prompting states to ratify it,
- the implementation of the Convention must be promoted by the Secretariat, in accordance with the provisions and under the leadership of the Conference of the Parties,

- the effort to combat desertification and to mitigate the effects of drought has become an essential dimension of development programmes in affected developing countries,

- the development of synergies in order to tackle desertification, land degradation and drought problems, and to do so in ways, which provide positive conditions and incentives to the various parties, involved to participate willingly.

CONTEXT

5- The worldwide effort to combat and reverse the processes of desertification and land degradation, and mitigate drought in arid, semi-arid and dry subhumid areas have substantial implications because of the geographical scope of these processes, the number of countries affected and the population groups who are the victims. They therefore stand at the heart of the strategies pursued by the international community to eradicate poverty, create propitious conditions for sustainable development and save the biosphere from the threats it faces. The UNCCD, which has now been ratified by the majority of the United Nations member countries, bears witness to the universal resolve to translate into new strategies, institutional arrangements and appropriate machinery for concerted action and cooperation the determination of the Parties and all actors to respond to this challenge.

6- The objectives of the Convention are to combat desertification and land degradation, and mitigate the effects of drought in affected countries. These objectives are to be met through effective action at all levels, supported by international cooperation and partnership arrangements, within the framework of an integrated approach consistent with Agenda 21, with a view to contributing to the eradication of poverty and the achievement of sustainable development in affected areas.

7- The UNCCD is to be implemented through National Action Programmes (NAP's) which, *inter alia*, promote:

(I) Preventive measures;
(II) Climatologic, meteorological and hydrological capabilities;
(III) Capacity building and institutional strengthening;
(IV) Effective participation of people living in affected areas,
(V) Mobilization and channeling of resources for the implementation at all levels,
(VI) Regular review/assessment of action undertaken. The Convention is also to be implemented through Subregional Action Programmes (SRAPs) and Regional Action Programmes (RAP's), which have the same basic features of the NAP's.

8- The Convention joins other international legal instruments, which strive to remedy the hurt sustained by the planet. But it is also an innovative instrument in that it has set itself the role of relocating a clearly circumscribed problem in the context of sustainable development in the affected countries. The Convention encourages further coordination of activities carried out under its auspices and other international agreements, and notes the trend in the commitments, of the international community to deal with problems of the environment and development in an integrated manner.

9- The thrust of the Convention is to stress that it is not to be seen as initiating a separated programme to combat desertification and mitigate the effects of drought, but that efforts towards this objective should be seen as an element in country's overall development plans. That is, this Convention is as much a developmental as an environmental undertaking. In this context, the medium-term strategy which the Secretariat propose to pursue going forward should view as an effort to mainstream its activities, to increase and improve the action of all actors and partners interested to combat desertification and mitigate the effects of drought.

MISSION STATEMENT / ROLE OF THE SECRETARIAT

10- The UNCCD entered into force on 26 December 1996. Through it, the Parties and signatory countries acknowledging that desertification and drought are problems of global dimension in that they affect all regions of the world and that joint action of the international community is needed to combat desertification and/or mitigate the effects of drought, as well as its social, economic and political implications, enacted legal provisions which refer expressly to general and specific obligations, relating to development and integrated action. In this respect, the Convention contains many provisions which refer to integrated approaches, methodologies, specific and global measures which will make it possible to combat desertification effectively and enhance efforts to mitigate the effects of drought.

11- However, the Convention has yet to find a true identity, understood as the way in which it will be perceived by the actors concerned as an effective instrument for combating desertification and mitigating the effects of drought. The Secretariat constitutes one of the key institutions established by the Convention. Indeed, the Secretariat is expected to perform, *inter alia* servicing, facilitating and support functions, in accordance with the provisions of the Convention. It is clear that the mandate, which the Secretariat has been given, does not make it an operational body.

12- Like the other Conventions Secretariats, this one service the Conference of the Parties (COP) by arranging its meetings, preparing documents, coordinating with other relevant bodies, compiling and transmitting information.

13- The Permanent Secretariat shall also facilitate consultations, assistance to affected developing country Parties, particularly those in Africa, on request, in the compilation and communication of information required under the Convention, and the convocation of consultative processes aim to the conclusions of partnership agreements.

14- Further, the Permanent Secretariat shall support appropriate measures and activities that contribute to take relevant provisions of the Convention into consideration, to promote the most of the comparative advantages of the Convention, and to ensure sustainable mobilization of the international community in tackling the challenge of combating desertification and mitigating the effects of drought. Country Parties, notably affected developing country Parties can rely on the Secretariat for information or advice on.

15- It is important to underline that the functions above can only be discharged realistically by taking into consideration not only the actual resources available to the Secretariat in responding to demand for services, facilitation and supports, but also the perception of the needs of the Parties, which recent experience has highlighted.

ELEMENTS OF THE STRATEGY

16- Secretariat's strategy for the implementation of the Convention consists of two major elements:

- The first is based on the premise that through the effective implementation of the Convention, affected country Parties, in particular developing countries can realize the full potential contribution to sustainable development. This potential includes poverty eradication, public awareness, promotion of the role of women and other major groups, involvement of NGO's and other components of civil society and support for services;

- The second is based on the fact that affected developing countries can rely on it for information or advice on.

17- Three main-ideas have emerged in characterizing strategy around which the various spheres of activity of a medium-term action programme might be structured. These ideas are those of "reference", "advocacy" and "synergy". In keeping with these ideas, the Secretariat shall:

(a) Serve as a source of reference to Parties on how to access to scientific and technical data and analysis and perform a clearing house functions,

(b) Put itself forward as an advocate of awareness creation among actors and public opinion concerning the challenges presented by the need to combat desertification and mitigate the effects of drought in the context of sustainable development;

(c) Serve as one of a driving force for the creation of synergies in the context of cooperation., particularly at the international and regional levels for the implementation of the Convention.

18- Such main-ideas will enable the Secretariat to evaluate the implementation of its programme of action. On this basis, it will be possible to decide whether this role and these functions are indeed in keeping new phase of Convention implementation. That pragmatism must prevail and that all the initial ideas may be reassessed as the perceptions of the Parties to the Convention evolue.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

19- The overall goals and objectives of the strategy are to foster and promote the effective implementation of the Convention, Particularly in developing countries with the objectives of enabling activities and projects related to combat desertification and mitigate the effects of drought to contribute significantly to sustainable development of affected country Parties.

20- In that spirit, the Secretariat shall act as follows:

(a) Promote linkages and partnerships to advance the effective implementation of the Convention;

(b) Work, at the request of Governments, and in keeping with the strategic focus of the Convention, as a catalyst for the initiatives of the Parties, the scientific community, the intergovernmental agencies and the non-governmental organizations involved in restoring agro-ecological balance in the arid, semi-arid, dry subhumid or degraded areas,

(c) Help to take the necessary steps to strengthen the capabilities for implementation of the Convention,

(d) Advocate the application of the participatory approaches as well as the cooperation machinery in order to allow the maximization of the specific measures designed to combat desertification and the degradation of arid, semi-arid and dry subhumid lands and to mitigate the effects of drought;

(e) Establish a networking mechanism to promote between sessions of the Conference of the Parties, regular dialogue between Secretariat and other public and private organizations, including universities, involved in the implementation of the Convention;

(f) Contribute to the creation of an iterative process of follow-up and evaluation of the implementation of the Convention and continuously improve its own efficiency and the relevance of its activities, under the guidance of the Conference of the Parties,

21- The application of the strategy will vary from one region or country to another, but the common essential characteristic will be an integrated approach to the implementation of the Convention. The approach taken by the Secretariat should also be conformed with the following criteria:

- Continuity. The strategy builds on interim Secretariat experience, in particular those that have successfully advanced Secretariat's functions and role,

- Financial feasibility. Projected activities should be in relation or adequacy to budgetary limits; and

- Increase emphasis on effectiveness and efficiency. This Strategy contains elements that contribute to improvement of the Secretariat's work.

AREAS OF INTERVENTION

22- This strategy recommends five major areas of intervention in implementation of the Convention when considering Secretariat initiatives and activities The five major arm of intervention can also be understood, as categories of activity. In this way, these categories of activity constitute the practical underpinnings of the three main ideas of the strategy. The areas of intervention or categories of activity are as follow:

(a) First area: "Providing core secretariat services";

(b) Second area: "Facilitating CCD implementation programming processes, including supporting participatory development and involvement of civil society";

(c) Third area.: "Establishing a framework for national focal points leadership";

(d) Fourth area: "Developing knowledge bases for user driven science and technology";

(e) Fifth area: "Facilitating dissemination of information and knowledge, and exchange of information".

FIRST AREA: PROVIDING CORE SECRETARIAT SERVICES

23- In keeping with relevant provisions of the Convention, the action undertaken under this heading will essentially be aimed providing the Conference of the Parties and the related bodies with the services functionally devolving on the Secretariat. Such services include institutional, legal and logistic support required for the smooth operation of the Conference of the Parties and its subsidiary bodies, especially the Committee of Science and Technology. They also include liaison and

external relations' functions as well as administrative and budgetary functions. Lastly, they relate to the political aspects of coordination. In this regard, and bearing in mind the very broad provisions of the Convention concerning sustainable development, the Secretariat would appear to be expected to become a source of reference in a network of interactions with the other Conventions relating to the environment and sustainable development.

SECOND AREA: FACILITATING CCD IMPLEMENTATION PROGRAMMING PROCESSES. INCLUDING SUPPORTING PARTICIPATORY DEVELOPMENT AND INVOLVEMENT OF CIVIL SOCIETY

24- In keeping with relevant provisions of the Convention, as well as with appropriate articles of the regional annexes, the action undertaken in this area will be aimed at advocating the Parties to the Convention to draw up their own programmes of action. The Secretariat will contribute to facilitate the processes of consultation go that these programmes can secure the support of international cooperation agencies and partnership agreements. In this area the Secretariat will be also the center of reference in taking stock of action undertaken and evaluate its impact on the implementation of the Convention. Further, the action undertaken in this area will in various forms, facilitate support to the policies and strategies decided on by the Parties to the Convention in order to broaden the field of the participatory approaches and to secure ever greater involvement by civil society in the process of sustainable development. The Secretariat can act in various ways to facilitate support to the application of measures directed towards this end.

THIRD AREA: ESTABLISHING A FRAMEWORK FOR NATIONAL FOCAL POINTS LEADERSHIP.

25- Implementation of the Convention poses great challenges to affected developing countries both in the realization of new opportunities and the management of the new responsibilities. For all affected countries the first item on the agenda is the elaboration of National Action Programme, and the formulation of strategies that identify the nature and level of assistance required. In this context the aim is, in conjunction with national focal point, to keep the momentum provided by the Convention elaboration process and to sensitize all actors concerned by the implementation to the need to continue to follow the new strategy under the provisions of the Convention. It involves promotional activities by national focal points, which will initiate and promote dialogue at all levels and mobilize support for the new approach from scientists in various disciplines, public and private sector partners and the community at large. This will provide a useful opportunity to capture the attention of key groups and actors. The national focal points must sustain their promotional effort over long period, and, through advocacy, obtain the involvement of the relevant groups and disciplines. In this context, the Secretariat should facilitate contact and create linkage among national focal points as well as facilitate training and educational support. Indeed the action undertaken in this area will also make the Secretariat possible to help national focal points in their work, both through the dissemination of information and through support

in the preparation and updating of National Action Programmes and the reports submitted to the Conference of the Parties.

FOURTH AREA: DEVELOPING KNOWLEDGE BASES FOR USER DRIVEN SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

26- Effective implementation of the Convention must be supported by adequate scientific data and appropriate technology. In affected developing countries, adequate scientific data and appropriate technology are lacking. This constitutes one of the most critical implementation problem. The action undertaken in this area will be aimed at creating a durable, but flexible mechanism for promoting the coordination of issues related to science and technology. This should be accomplished by involving and networking existing structures with the objective of developing a system that facilitates the interaction of actors, partners, researchers and the community at large in managing research on desertification, land degradation and drought issues, and in applying the results of such research. In other words, this action will involve the establishment of an interactive communication network by means of which the users can be linked to the scientific and technical bodies with expertise in the field of efforts to combat desertification and land degradation, and to mitigate the effects of drought. A leading role will fall to the Committee on Science and Technology.

FIFTH AREA: FACILITATING DISSEMINATION OF INFORMATION AND EXCHANGE OF INFORMATION

27- Without appropriate use of information and their technologies at all levels of decision-making, Parties to the Conversation, in particular affected developing country Parties and other actors, and researchers alike will continue to improvise in their efforts to combat desertification and land degradation, and to mitigate the effects of drought. Therefore, the Secretariat shall adopt as one of its high priorities the strengthening of the development of information on the implementation of the Convention, it means on what countries are doing in the framework of the implementation, and to facilitate access to knowledge about relevant technologies, including the dissemination of knowledge and Information among Parties, actors, partners, farmers, scientists, communities and policy-makers. The goal will be essentially to prompt collective awareness of the worldwide risks arising from desertification, land degradation and the effects of drought. This action will be based on diversified communication strategies, which applied by the Secretariat.

28- Finally, a monitoring and evaluation process must be included in every aspect of the five areas of intervention. This will ensure that efforts have maximal impact and will indicate, if necessary, the need for mid-corrections The five areas of intervention represent a "check-list" of activities that need to be considered in the programme of action for the Secretariat of the Convention. The list does not imply a linear progression from one item to the next; rather Permanent Secretariat may use these areas of intervention as guidelines for developing and operating its programme of action.